

**PERIOD ONE**  
***Technological and Environmental  
Transformations, to c. 600 B.C.E.***

**PART ONE**  
**First Things First: Beginnings  
in History, to 500 B.C.E.**

***AP World History Key Concepts***

- 1.1: Big Geography and the Peopling of the Earth**
- 1.2: The Neolithic Revolution and Early Agricultural Societies**
- 1.3: The Development and Interactions of Early Agricultural, Pastoral, and Urban Societies**

**The Big Picture: Turning Points  
in Early World History**

The first unit for both the AP World History course and this textbook covers the largest span of time of the six units. Four major turning points in human history occurred during this period; the first three are covered in Chapter 1 and the last in Chapter 2.

- ♦ **The Emergence of Humankind:** According to scientists, about 5 to 6 million years ago, several species of bipedal primates emerged in eastern and southern Africa. Eventually, this line led to *Homo sapiens*—modern humans—with large brains, the ability to use language and communicate abstract ideas, and the ability to create tools.
- ♦ **The Globalization of Humankind:** Around 100,000 years ago during the Paleolithic era (Old Stone Age), humans began to migrate out of Africa, armed with stone tools, the ability to use fire, and the ability to use language to work together in small groups of hunter-gatherers. People adapted to a variety of environments, from bitter cold tundras to burning hot deserts to grasslands and forests. Gradually, changes took place in the “tool kits” of human groups, helping them adapt to

changing environmental circumstances. In addition, they developed art, religion, rituals, and stories (see Map 1.1, p. 4 and pp. 16–17).

- ♦ **The Revolution of Farming and Herding:** By about 11,000 years ago, in separate regions in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, humans developed farming and animal husbandry; this development is often called the First Agricultural Revolution. This development has been called the single most important event in human history and has led to the growth of civilization as we know it today. The increased reliability of food sources also led to a population growth. The type of agriculture—or whether farming developed or not—depended on the climate and available plants and animals in a region. Some regions, typically dry grasslands, were more conducive to herding or pastoralism, while others provided enough food resources so that people continued as hunters, fishers, or foragers. The types of crop varied from region to region, such as potatoes in the Andes, grains in Eurasia, or corn (maize) in Mesoamerica. The Americas had relatively few domesticable animals—and no draft animals—compared to Afro-Eurasia, where goats, sheep, pigs, cattle, and later horses and camels were available (see Mapping Part One, pp. 8–9). The first farming villages were small, with people growing their own food and living without elaborate political or religious systems. Pastoral groups also remained small.
- ♦ **The Turning Point of Civilization:** As farming provided a more reliable source of food, populations grew, and some settlements developed into civilizations. The earliest civilizations developed in seven separate areas between 3500 B.C.E. and 500 B.C.E. These First Civilizations gave rise to empires, cultural and religious traditions, new technologies, more hierarchical social and gender roles, and large-scale warfare.



especially in areas with abundant resources. In some areas, humans began to settle down—at least for part of the year—in small villages based on horticulture while they also continued hunting or fishing. At various times in different regions, settled agriculture emerged based on the available domesticable plants and animals. This deliberate cultivation of particular plants and animals is termed the Neolithic Revolution or Agricultural Revolution. Other regions less suited to agriculture—such as savannas and steppes—encouraged the development of pastoralism, in which people relied on the milk, meat, and blood of domesticated animals that they raised. The earliest known sites for settled agriculture were in the Fertile Crescent (see Map 1.4, p. 31). See also Map 1.3, “The Global Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism” (pp. 28–29), for the sites where different plants and animals were first domesticated. Humans were now changing the environment, not just adapting to it. These new ways of exploiting the environment led to the development of new cultural, social, economic, and to a lesser extent, political patterns in both village life and pastoral communities.

## Theme 1: Interaction Between Humans and the Environment

Paleolithic humans adapted to different environments, while Neolithic humans modified their environments to greater and greater extents. Early humans were food collectors and scavengers. They developed tools such as hand axes and the use of fire and began to hunt and fish as well as collect foods such as berries, nuts, insects, and grains. As humans migrated out of Africa to other regions, they encountered many new environments—harsh tundra, forests, deserts, or large bodies of water—that required the creation of new tools. This migration was helped by the Ice Age, which lowered sea levels and created land bridges or narrower straits connecting regions such as the Americas, Indonesia, or Australia with Afro-Eurasia. New technologies such as layered clothing sewn with bone needles, spear throwers or bows, flaked stone tools, nets, and weaving allowed humans to enter into Ice Age Eurasia. Other species of human, such as Neanderthals in Europe or *Homo floresiensis* in Indonesia, became extinct soon after modern humans arrived. We don’t know whether these other species died from being marginalized by the more technologically advanced *Homo sapiens* or whether disease or conflict killed them.

By the time of the Neolithic Revolution, humans had become proficient roving hunters and gatherers in many different environments, with about 70 percent of their food coming from gathering (often performed by women) and 30 percent from hunting (often undertaken by men). Perhaps as a response to environmental changes at the end of the last Ice Age, people began new methods of exploiting the environment, leading to the domestication of plants and animals and the rise of settled village life and pastoralism. This Agricultural Revolution created fundamental changes in the role of humans on the planet: they had become the shapers of their environment.

As people moved to agricultural life, they worked longer and harder for a more limited diet than that of their hunter-gatherer ancestors. The needs of agriculture led to drastic environmental change as a few domesticated crops replaced the variety of plants that had existed before. Both plants and animals were selectively bred to create desired results. Other environmental impacts included deforestation to grow food crops, terracing hillsides, digging irrigation canals, and soil depletion from overuse. In addition, new diseases passed from domesticated animals to humans.

## Theme 2: Development and Interaction of Cultures

Our knowledge of Paleolithic and Neolithic human culture is based almost exclusively on physical objects studied by archeologists. Archeological sites for early humans are scattered and often discovered by chance. Even when we find artifacts, we do not know with certainty what they mean because the people who made them are not alive to tell us nor can anthropologists observe them actually using their artifacts. Scholars therefore study the few remaining stone-age cultures (in places like the Amazon basin or Australia and New Guinea) to try to draw analogies between the life and artifacts of people today and those of our ancient ancestors. Planned burials with grave objects such as beads, ochre pigments, and flowers imply a belief system. Female statuettes unearthed throughout Eurasia (sometimes called the stone-age Venus) may be connected to the diffusion of religious ideas centered on female fertility and certainly show communication networks operating over large areas. Diffusion of artifacts such as the Clovis points in the Americas also point to a widespread network of communication. Dramatic cave paintings often depicting animals that were hunted or herded have been found in both Eurasia (Lascaux in Western Europe and Bhimbetka in India) and Africa (Sahara and San rock art). In contemporary Australian stone-age cultures, the persistence of rock paintings and ceremonies associated with the Dreamtime provide a unique glimpse into what earlier Neolithic cultures may have been like.

During the Neolithic era, we begin to see the first monumental architecture, such as the complex at Göbekli Tepe in modern Turkey. Megaliths such as Göbekli Tepe and the more famous Stonehenge in England have been interpreted as religious centers or calendars to mark the solstices and equinoxes. Some archeologists argue that the need to feed the large number of people building and using such sites may have been one of the factors that encouraged a permanent horticultural lifestyle. The people living in early settlements in the Fertile Crescent, such as Ain Ghazal, created enigmatic statues, which may have represented deities, heroes, or leaders. Late in the Neolithic era, temples (with priests and priestesses), tombs, and their associated art developed in cities.

## Theme 3: State-Building, Expansion, and Conflict

This theme is not well developed in this time period. Hunting and gathering bands tended to be small, relatively egalitarian, and mobile. Large-scale conflicts did not seem to arise: why fight and lose some of your precious kinsmen if there was other territory to move to? Leadership roles seem to have been fluid and related to a specific need. True state building did not begin before there were permanently settled agricultural villages competing for land and resources. By the end of this period, more powerful leaders emerged. In agricultural areas such as Mesopotamia, secular and religious power was inherited and reinforced through the personal charisma of leaders, their ritual roles, their ability to redistribute wealth through gift giving, and their roles as battle leaders. Pastoral societies also developed first as relatively egalitarian kinship groups and moved toward clan or tribal leaders with greater wealth or power.



## Theme 4: Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems

Early humans were generalists, with each person creating the tools needed for exploiting the local environment for survival needs. However, very early in human history, items were exchanged or traded outside their place of origin: stone, flint, or special woods for tool making, decorative items (shells, feathers, pigments), new tools such as bone needles or Clovis points, and cultural artifacts such as carved figurines (see Theme 2).

The Agricultural Revolution sparked a rapid increase in the quantity and types of tools and weapons. Agriculturalists developed new technologies such as sickles, plows, kilns and potter's wheels, looms, sun-dried mud bricks, chisels, boats (including sails by Mesopotamians), and tools related to domestication of animals. Pastoralists invented saddles, bridles, harnesses, and new types of bows. Trade and communication systems expanded between villages, and between villages and the hinterlands that possessed resources that were not available locally. Often, pastoral groups transmitted goods and innovations across large areas between early civilizations and across ecological zones between pastoral and settled peoples. In the growing cities, wealth accumulated in the hands of leaders and priests. Priests, in addition to their religious roles, often controlled the exchange and creation of goods, organized large projects such as irrigation canals and monumental architecture, allotted fields, and controlled agricultural and artisanal labor.

## Theme 5: Development and Transformation of Social Structures

While most hunter-gatherer bands seem to have had gender-specific tasks (women more often were the gatherers, men the hunters), there seems to have been relative equality between the sexes. Little difference in material wealth or social power is evident. All people contributed to the collection of food needed for survival and all shared the same skills set.

However, the development of agriculture and pastoralism gradually changed that egalitarian social structure. Wealth in the form of arable land or herds of animals became more unevenly distributed. Society therefore became more stratified, and labor became more specialized. Early horticultural villages seem to have remained relatively more balanced in gender and social roles. Men continued to hunt, while women continued to provide many of the major agricultural innovations and much of the labor, using digging sticks and hoes to work their fields, creating looms to weave fibers from plants or animals, creating pottery to store food, and so on. Evidence for the continued strong role of women is found in the dominance of female images in art, in matrilineal descent (tracing descent through the mother's family), and matrilineal marriage patterns (men left their birth families to live with their wives). As more animals were domesticated and the use of animal-drawn plows spread, men took over the heavier agricultural labor and began to dominate.

Village-based lineage societies tended to reduce the equalities of earlier societies: elders controlled the labor forces and sought to control women's reproductive lives to ensure growth of the (now often patrilineal) lineage or kinship group. The growth of warfare led to the collection of captives who were placed in forced labor roles. Intensification of agricultural production and increased conflict seem to have led to the develop-

ment of larger cities and chiefdoms, intensifying social stratification and the dominance of men over women.

Pastoral societies tended to retain more of the relative gender equality of earlier Paleolithic cultures, as evidenced by the burial goods of some women who seem to have held high status as warriors or healers and shamans.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **First Civilizations: Cities, States, and Unequal Societies, 3500 B.C.E.–500 B.C.E.**

## **AP World History Key Concepts**

### **1.3 The Development and Interactions of Early Agricultural, Pastoral, and Urban Societies**

**I. Core and foundational civilizations developed in a variety of geographical and environmental settings where agriculture flourished.**

**II. The first states emerged within core civilizations.**

**III. Culture played a significant role in unifying states through laws, language, literature, religion, myths, and monumental art.**

The First Civilizations arose independently in the several millennia after 3500 B.C.E. You must be able to identify the locations of these civilizations (see Map 2.1, “First Civilizations,” pp. 64–65) and understand the characteristics they shared as well as their unique characteristics.

- ♦ Sumer in ancient Mesopotamia
- ♦ Egypt along the Nile River in northeastern Africa
- ♦ The civilization of Norte Chico (and later the Chavín) in the coastal region of the Andes in present-day Peru
- ♦ The Indus Valley civilization in present-day Pakistan
- ♦ The Shang dynasty located in northern China
- ♦ The Oxus in what is today northern Afghanistan and Southern Turkmenistan
- ♦ The Olmecs of modern-day southern Mexico

### **Theme 1: Interaction Between Humans and the Environment**

The First Civilizations arose in areas that had previously developed village agriculture, which was discussed in Chapter 1. All of these First Civilizations saw population increases due to intensified agricultural techniques that were adapted to their specific environments, ranging from lowland rain forest for the Olmecs, to desert oases for the



Oxus, to desert punctuated by rivers for the Norte Chico people, to the river valleys of the Nile, Huang He, Tigris and Euphrates, and Indus. All of the First Civilizations were based on water management. Some, such as the Xia dynasty in China (a precursor to the Shang), dug canals to control devastating flooding. Others employed terraced fields, irrigation, and swamp drainage in their farming. The Egyptians used the regular flooding of the Nile Valley, which yearly brought rich mud that replenished fields and provided agricultural bounty. Larger populations meant increased demand for food. Overuse of fields, especially where slash-and-burn agriculture was being practiced (Olmecs) led to soil depletion. Intensive irrigation could lead to the fields becoming too saline, as in the Indus Valley. Deforestation—whether to clear land for agriculture or to harvest wood for fuel or construction—led to erosion. Periods of drought brought further stress. Whatever the cause, environmental degradation often led to lower crop yields and sometimes even to the abandonment of cities.

## Theme 2: Development and Interaction of Cultures

First Civilizations shared common cultural characteristics: more elaborate belief systems often rooted in fertility deities and supporting social and gender inequalities, writing and record-keeping systems, monumental art and architecture, and the explosion of the arts and literature. Distinctive writing systems emerged in most, but not all, of the early civilizations; the Oxus and the Andean regions, for example, did not develop true literacy. Writing served a number of functions, from celebrating the accomplishments of a society's leaders to recording transactions and taxes. Writing also gave birth to written laws such as the Code of Hammurabi (see Document 2.2, p. 95) and to literature (see Snapshot: Writing in Ancient Civilizations, p. 79). Monumental architecture (such as ziggurats and pyramids, tombs, temples, and palaces) and art (Olmec heads, Egyptian statues, etc.) reinforced the glory and power of the rulers and the gods.

## Theme 3: State-Building, Expansion, and Conflict

Archaeologists and historians have long debated the origins of the state. It is clear that agriculture was a necessary precondition, but it was not the only factor in the rise of the state. One theory is that the growing density of population and the relative scarcity of fertile land for farming meant that highly organized states had an advantage in the competition for resources. This competition usually led to warfare. Most of these civilizations followed a similar pattern of state building: coercion tactics to force people to obey authority and military might to expand control into new areas. The system of kingship (often divine kingship) also bound people to their leaders and priests. The Xia began the enduring concept of the Mandate of Heaven, linking the ruler as “the Son of Heaven” to the gods. The Egyptian pharaoh also ruled as a descendant of the gods, as most likely did the Olmec rulers. Some civilizations, such as in the Indus Valley, seemed to have a high level of coordination and planning (streets were laid out on a grid, uniform measurements, sewers, and “zoning”) without signs of a king or other central ruler, leading to speculation that they may have been governed by a council of some sort.



## Theme 4: Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems

The economy of the early civilizations was based on agriculture, and control of the land was the major source of wealth. However, many skilled artisans created artifacts, textiles, pottery, weapons, and tools both for use within their own civilizations and for trade by merchants or gift exchanges between rulers. A number of early civilizations engaged in long-distance trade to obtain goods or materials (usually luxury items) that were not available locally. Many Indus Valley traders lived in Mesopotamia to facilitate trade between the two civilizations. Mesopotamia also had trade routes connecting it to Egypt and Central Asia. The Egyptians had similarly extensive trade routes, including to Nubia and the interior of Africa, the Red and Mediterranean Seas, as well as to their near neighbors in Mesopotamia. Trade often moved through middlemen, such as pastoral peoples, or through a series of merchant-traders working in a particular region. The Oxus civilization served as a hub in a trans-Eurasian trading network by conducting trade with China, India, Mesopotamia, and pastoral nomads of the steppes. The First Civilizations in the Americas, like the Olmecs and the Norte Chico people, developed in isolation from each other but did engage in more localized trade within their cultural region. The only item exchanged (indirectly) between the two regions was maize, which originated in Mesoamerica.

## Theme 5: Development and Transformation of Social Structures

Many of the First Civilizations witnessed an “erosion of equality” as these societies developed hierarchies of class and gender. Upper-class people with greater wealth were able to avoid physical labor and occupied the highest political, military, and religious positions within their societies. The majority of people were free commoners, but most of the early civilizations also developed systems of slavery, which varied greatly from place to place. This kind of slavery differed greatly from the slavery that developed in the Americas after the seventeenth century. Slavery in the First Civilizations was not perpetual in that the children of slaves could become free and was also not associated with race. The cities of Norte Chico show less signs of economic specialization than the other First Civilizations, and the enigmatic ruins of the Indus Valley show little evidence of social hierarchy.

The most significant social division within human societies was based on gender. Patriarchy has been the most pervasive gender system in human history, in which men were regarded as superior to women, men had legal and property rights denied to women, and men were far more active in governing. Women’s roles were increasingly confined to the home and defined by their relationship to a male (father, husband, or son). There is much speculation about why patriarchy developed with civilization. One approach suggests that the intensification of agriculture and the shift to plow-based agriculture, which required the greater strength more often found in men, led to a decline in the status of women. The increase of warfare and combat may have also contributed to patriarchy; increased warfare led to the glorification of the warrior as well as an increase in the number of women who were captured as slaves. Finally, the development of private property may have helped shape early patriarchy; men wanted to ensure that only their own children inherited their land or wealth, and to do so, they attempted to control women’s reproductive freedom.